

ATPA

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Joins in the Celebration of Labor's Day

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PETER HERRLING

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ATPA

THIS LABOR DAY WEEKEND



Celebrate our freedom to form unions
and bargain for better wages, benefits
and working conditions.

OREGON AFL-CIO



The officers, executive board
and staff extend to all Union Members

Labor Day Greetings!

'Working Together for Oregon's Working Families'

TOM CHAMBERLAIN, *President*
BARBARA BYRD, *Secretary-Treasurer*

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REBEKAH ORR, *Research & Communications Director*

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KATHRYN GROVER, *Campaign Logistics Coordinator*;
SUE HARRISON, *Secretary*; TAMMY ANDERSON, *Bookkeeper*

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...Union workers do better

(From Page 1)

benefits. And besides the wholly unemployed, as of June, there were about 5 million involuntary part-timers (workers who want but can't find full-time work). Because so many workers are part-time, the average workweek is 33.6 hours. [In manufacturing the average is 41 hours.]

The U.S. trade deficit appears to have stopped growing, falling to \$700 billion in 2007 from an all-time record of \$753 billion the year before. Imports of foreign goods still increased, but exports grew faster. Thus far this year, the deficit is on track to match last year's.

Prices for most things have begun to rise again. Overall, as of June the prices of items tracked in the Consumer Price Index had risen 5 percent from the year before. But not all goods are rising equally. Clothing prices have been falling for years, but energy costs are on track to rise 29 percent this year, transportation costs 11.9 percent, and food 6.6 percent. Medical cost increases have slowed this year, however, to about the overall rate of inflation.

Meanwhile, the Dow Jones, NASDAQ, and the S&P 500 stock indexes have all lost about 10 percent of their value since 2008 began. And that's not good news for workers' retirement security or for the Taft-Hartley trust balances that union workers rely on.

**UNION WORKERS
STILL WELL AHEAD**
Despite all the bad news, unions

remain a relative island of stability and job security. In the private sector, union workers made \$3.97 per hour more than nonunion workers, on average, as of March 2008. Union workers averaged \$22.46 an hour, while non-union workers averaged \$18.49.

Benefits widen the difference. Union employers pay \$3.95 an hour for health benefits, compared to \$1.68 an hour for nonunion employers. And employer retirement contributions average \$2.49 an hour for union workers, and just 78 cents an hour for non-union workers.

As of March 2008, 86 percent of union workers were participating in some kind of employer-sponsored retirement plan, compared to 51 percent of nonunion workers. And among workers with employer-provided health coverage, the employee share of monthly premiums was half as much for union workers: For single coverage, on average union workers picked up 9 percent of the premium, compared to 20 percent for nonunion workers; for family coverage, union workers paid 15 percent, and non-union workers 33 percent. Union workers have an average of 10 paid holidays a year, two more than non-union workers. And union workers have more vacation days and sick leave, and earn more overtime and shift-differential pay.

LOCAL CONDITIONS BETTER
So far the nationwide construction downturn hasn't hit local building trades unions, says John Mohlis, exec-

utive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council.

"I don't know that we're bullet-proof," Mohlis said, "but we're weathering it better than other parts of country."

Mohlis notes that there's been a slowing of construction in the condo market, but an uptick in work elsewhere: roads and bridges, schools, alternative energy projects, and airport and hospital construction. One worrisome sign is that bankers are slowing down lending money on private development projects. Still, union building trades members aren't staying very long on hiring hall out-of-work lists. Mohlis said that's a big contrast to the recession of four or five years ago, when local building trades employment took a hit.

UNION TRENDS

While unions may be holding on to gains, the labor movement is changing.

There's now a stark difference in unionization rates between the public- and private-sector work force. The typical union worker is now more likely to be a teacher, firefighter, or postal employee than a construction or factory worker.

Then there are demographics. Over 40 percent of union members are over the age of 45, notes LERC director Bussel.

(Turn to Page 11)

MONICA A. SMITH

BARBARA J. DIAMOND

MARGARET S. OLNEY

The attorneys formerly known as

SMITH, DIAMOND & OLNEY

announce the dissolution of their law firm effective August 31, 2008, due to the retirement of Monica Smith from the private practice of law.

Barbara and Margaret congratulate Monica on 26 years of excellent service to the labor community and thank her for her friendship, leadership, and loyalty.

We are, and always will be, sisters.

Barbara and Margaret are continuing to represent labor unions and individual employees at the addresses below:

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New addresses effective September 1, 2008